PLANNING AHEAD

Notes for the Planning and Policy Community

Volume 7, Issue 1 January 2004

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Vacancy Announcement – Baltimore District

The Chief of Planning Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District is retiring this summer. The position will be announced and advertised within the next couple weeks; if you are interested in applying please visit Army Civilian Personnel Online for a copy of the vacancy announcement. The point of contact is Wendy Taylor, Human Resources Office, Baltimore District, (410) 962-2087.

OMB-Approved Survey Questions and Submittal Requirements Are Available on IWR Website

Bruce Carlson – CECW-PG

This is a New Year's reminder that information for conducting surveys is available on the IWR website. The website includes survey questions developed for the various Corps mission areas and the associated approval process required for implementing surveys.

Any set of questions asked by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of 10 or more respondents outside the Federal Government must originate from OMB-approved questionnaires. This requirement also applies to contractors and local sponsors conducting public surveys in support of Corps studies.

No survey may be conducted until final approval is received from OMB.

Corps policy for data collection surveys is based in law to comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PL 104-13). The policy is designed to reduce the Government's burden on the public, to assure quality in the study design, and to save resources through careful survey design.

All survey efforts must be coordinated through the designated MSC points of contact, and OMB must approve each survey effort prior to implementation. The transmittal letter on the website explains the approval process that is required for each survey effort; the approval process takes ten business days.

Bruce Carlson is the Headquarters point of contact for planning surveys, and Judy Rice is the Headquarters point of contact for operations surveys. Stuart Davis is the IWR point of contact.

Director of Civil Works Approves Models Task Force Recommendations

Ken Orth – CEIWR

In November 2003 the Director of Civil Works approved the recommendations of the Planning Models Improvement Task Force, establishing new roles and responsibilities for the Headquarters and the Planning Centers of Expertise in overseeing planning models. The Task Force was created in January 2003 when the Director charged the Chief of Planning and Policy Division to carry out "a process to review, improve and validate analytical tools and models for USACE (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) Civil Works business lines." The Task Force, which included representatives from each Corps Division, identified an array of model-related problems, conducted a survey of planning models, prepared papers on model-related issues, analyzed numerous options for many issues, formulated recommendations, and prepared its final report in September 2003.

Recommendations assigned to the Headquarters include:

- Publish guidance that prescribes a corporate business process and policy for development, certification, training, and on-going support for planning models. The regulation will include a process to certify planning models based on peer support and peer review.

- Work with the Planning Centers of Expertise to prioritize certifications, assign certification responsibility for models that are not clearly associated with any Center, and resolve other questions related to planning models.
- Work with the Research and Development Directorate to establish a separate strategic research program for planning model needs.
- Maintain the Planning Models Toolbox as the source of certified models.
- Work in a timely manner with the Communities of Practice, the Planning Centers of Expertise and the Corps research offices to field models critical to the planning process that are effective and defensible; and operate seamlessly across communities of practice and business lines.
- Conduct an annual strategic assessment of planning capability, including modeling and technology needs. Annually review model certifications issued by the Planning Centers of Expertise and Corps research offices. Prepare an annual report to the Director of Civil Works on model certifications and audits, the strategic assessment of planning capability, and other issues related to the state of planning models.

The Planning Centers of Expertise are responsible for planning models that support their respective business lines. Within their business areas, the Centers will:

- Certify planning models based on peer support and peer review in accordance with the Headquarters guidance.
- Work with the districts and the Corps research offices to develop, test, document, maintain, update, and provide training and ongoing support (help desk, for example) for planning models.
- Coordinate to corporately oversee the separate strategic research program for planning model needs as well as the planning-related work in their business lines throughout the research program.
- Work with Corps national data collection programs, such as the Waterborne Commerce Statistics and Flood Damage Data Collection Programs, to improve the usefulness and accessibility of data for planning models.
- Identify and reduce or otherwise resolve model redundancy among existing models.

The report also recommended roles for the districts and the Corps research offices. District Commanders will continue to be responsible for application of planning models to specific studies and projects, assignment of model users, quality assurance for data and other model inputs, interpretations of model outputs. The research offices will work with the districts and the Centers of Expertise to develop models and to certify the models that they develop. The Task Force recommended that the Corps leadership consider a variety of funding sources to pay for these recommendations, and that costs be shared among these sources.

The Task Force report, a six chapter main report and five appendixes (pdf files), is available at IWR's planning resources webpages. The Planning Community of Practice will soon establish a team to work with the Centers and others in implementing the recommendations. 🕮

Planning Models Improvement Program—Model Survey

Susan Durden – CEIWR

A consolidated source of information on what planning models are available or used for Corps planning studies does not exist. In order to begin building a useful source of information about planning models, a survey was fielded 17 July 2003 using a web-based platform. The purpose of the survey was to: (1) identify what planning models are used and what they do; (2) identify redundancies in models; and (3) identify gaps where new tools are needed.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey. I know everyone has many demands on their time and I appreciate the effort it takes to respond to yet another request. This article provides a brief summary of the survey results.

The survey was divided into three parts, focusing on national models, "home-grown" models and model gaps, i.e., new models that are needed. A total of 123 responses were received, and responses were received from every Corps district.

Part 1. This part of the survey focused on planning models commonly used on a national basis. Respondents indicated that the most frequently used models are HEC-FDA, @RISK (add-in to Excel), HEP and IWR-PLAN. Comments on these models were generally positive with good input on specific improvements.

Part 2. This part of the survey asked for information on other models that are used by Corps planners. Forty responses were received regarding other models; and removing duplicates resulted in a list of 36 models. Some, but not all, of these models were "home-grown." Models were identified almost evenly among the economic, environmental, and plan formulation communities of practice. Twenty-one were noted as used by more than one community of practice.

Part 3. This part asked about new models that are needed now or will be needed in the future. The most commonly defined needs were:

- Increased technology transfer is needed so people can find out what models are available: link on Planner's web site; CD; periodic articles in ***Planning Ahead***.
- Improving the HEC-FDA model is a priority need. Note: HEC is in the process of addressing the suggested improvements.
- A corporately approved coastal storm damage model needs to be completed. Note: "Becky," a coastal storm damage model, is under development at IWR.
- Adequate models for ecosystem restoration analysis and watershed planning are not commonly available. Need a model with greater scientific rigor that ties physical changes to service outputs.
- GIS based or GIS compatible models; scaleable models; and greater attention to maintenance and updating.
- New models should incorporate risk and uncertainty. Existing models should be updated to add capabilities to address risk and uncertainty.

A matrix has been developed that lists the identified models, their characteristics, and points of contact. We are in the process of verifying and completing the data in the matrix. When completed, the matrix will be posted on the Planners web site as an initial source of information on planning models. The posting will be announced in *Planning Ahead*. Information on additional models to be added to the matrix can be sent at any time to Susan Durden. 🕮

Top 20 Inland U.S. Ports for 2002

Debra Jackson-CEIWR-NDC-C

Trip ton-miles for an inland port is a measure indicating the contribution the port makes to the whole waterway system. Computing trip ton-miles proceeds as follows: first, each commercial cargo-carrying vessel (usually a barge) loaded or unloaded at the port is identified; next, the product of the tons times the total trip-miles (distance vessel loading point to unloading point) for all inland vessel trips for that port are summed. The measure takes into account distances traveled on all waterways traversed. The following table ranks the top 20 inland ports by their CY 2002 trip ton-miles and also displays the tonnage at each port. The number one port in 2002, Huntington-Tristate, had more than twice the tonnage of the number two port, St. Louis; however, it had only six percent more trip ton-miles.

For more information on this new measure contact Debra Jackson at WCSC, 504-862-1472.

Top 20 U.S. Inland Ports[1] ranked by CY 2002 Trip Ton-Miles

		Tons			Trip Ton-Miles[2]		
Rank	Port Name	Average CY 97-01	CY 02	Percent Diff.	Average CY 97-01	CY 02	Percent Diff.
		(Millions)			(Billions)		
1	Huntington – Tristate[3]	NA	81.1	NA	NA	26.9	NA
2	St. Louis, MO and IL	32.7	32.6	-0.3	24.2	25.4	5.1
3	Pittsburgh, PA	52.9	52.1	-1.6	18.3	17.2	-6.1
4	Cincinnati, OH	13.5	13.0	-3.8	9.1	8.5	-6.6
5	Memphis, TN	17.4	16.3	-6.6	7.4	7.1	-3.4
6	St. Paul, MN	5.0	5.6	11.7	5.1	5.6	9.6
7	Mount Vernon, IN	4.1	3.8	-7.3	4.1	3.0	-27.1
8	Louisville, KY	9.0	7.9	-11.9	3.8	3.0	-22.3
9	Guntersville, AL	2.4	2.4	1.5	1.9	2.2	11.3
10	Tulsa, Port of Catoosa, OK	2.1	2.1	-0.9	2.1	2.1	2.9
11	Nashville, TN	4.4	4.2	-4.8	2.0	1.8	-9.4
12	Vicksburg, MS	5.5	4.2	-22.3	2.3	1.6	-29.1
13	Chattanooga, TN	2.8	2.8	-2.7	1.8	1.5	-12.8
14	Minneapolis, MN	1.7	1.8	4.8	1.5	1.5	1.6
15	Greenville, MS	3.0	2.8	-7.6	1.3	1.1	-10.5
16	Helena, AR	1.8	1.8	-3.1	0.6	0.6	-5.1
17	Knoxville, TN	0.3	0.3	-8.8	0.3	0.3	-10.2
18	Natchez, MS	0.7	0.5	-22.0	0.3	0.3	-6.1
19	Rosedale, MS	0.6	0.5	-11.6	0.3	0.2	-20.4
20	Lake Providence, LA	0.5	0.5	-8.1	0.2	0.2	-8.4

1. "Inland Ports" are ports that are located on rivers and do not handle deep draft ship traffic.
2. Trip Ton-Miles compiled for inland moves only.
3. Huntington-Tristate was defined in CY 2000 as mile 256.8 to mile 356.8 on the Ohio River, plus the navigable portions of the Kanawha and Big Sandy rivers. In prior years the Port of Huntington, WV, was defined from mile 303 to mile 317 on the Ohio River. // Source: Compiled by the Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center.//

Space Available – Ecosystem Planning and Management Issues

WHAT: PROSPECT number 264
WHEN: 19-23 July 04
WHERE: Lafayette, LA - USGS facilities, the swamp, and selected restaurants

Jean O'Neil, US Army Engineer Research and Development Center Environmental Lab

Planners especially are encouraged to consider this PROSPECT class for improving their knowledge and abilities in dealing with ecosystem and watershed issues. Many aspects of land and water resource management are increasingly impacted by evolving technical and political issues. Issues discussed are frequently applicable to entire regions or the nation, and this class provides a forum for discussing current topics and potential alternatives for resolving problems. Emphasis is on the technical underpinnings of issues, recognizing that technical, policy, and procedural topics are intertwined.

On the first day students list and select the major issues to be discussed during the week, primarily in small group sessions. Some of the issues in the 2003 class included green dredging, NEPA in restoration, forming effective partnerships, urban stream restoration, incorporating uplands into restoration, monetizing environmental outputs, monitoring and adaptive management, and sustainability. As you may guess, we didn't get all the issues all solved but we made headway! The photos below were taken during field trips to learn about local systems, set up discussions, and observe wildlife. All students returned dry and alive and in one piece.

If you are interested, sign up with your training officer. Contact Jean O'Neil for information on class content (601-634-3641). Contact John Buckley for registration questions at phone 256-895-7431, or email him. Also see the training "purple book."

Agriculture and Inland Waterways Transportation – Research of Note

Those concerned with the future of inland waterway transportation will be interested in a paper by Washington State University economist Kenneth Casavant, Inland Waterborne Transportation-An Industry Under Siege (pdf). The paper was presented at a Long-Term Agricultural Transportation Strategy summit in St. Louis, MO, in November 2000, sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, and the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association. Of particular interest are the issue categories that Professor Casavant defines, "perspectives" and "practices," which he sees as influencing the priorities given to navigation uses of rivers. The paper's worth a read.

[I found this paper sort of accidentally on purpose while looking on Federal agency webpages for stuff of interest to Corps planners and evaluators. I don't know if any in the Corps know of this paper, but at least one of those myriad organizations that seem to exist for the express purpose of opposing *inland waterway investments knows, to the point of attempting to rebut it (pdf). Editor.]* 🕮

Instructions for Contributors to Planning Ahead

This newsletter is designed to improve the communication among all the planners and those we work with throughout the Corps. We hope that future editions will have mostly information and perspective from those of you on the front lines in the districts. We hope that these notes become a forum for you to share your experiences to help all of us learn from each other. We can't afford to reinvent the wheel in each office. We welcome your thoughts, questions, success stories, and bitter lessons so that we can share them on these pages. The articles should be short (2-3 paragraphs) except in some cases where you just have to say more.

- Use MS WORD
- Use "normal" style
- Use Times New Roman font, 11 point
- All text should be left justified with start of each paragraph indented by one tab stop.
- Each article should have short title with only initial letter of each word capitalized
- Following each title should be author's name and organization
- Last line should be contact information – phone number or e-mail address 🕮

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That single line of text should be: "subscribe ls-planningahead"

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Submissions Deadline

The deadline for material for the next issue is 20 February 2004.

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